Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 34:295–317, 2011
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ISSN: 1057-610X print / 1521-0731 online
DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2011.551719

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Gender, *Jihad*, and Jingoism[1]: Women as Perpetrators, Planners, and Patrons of Militancy in Kashmir

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The Kashmir case is a conundrum in the study of women's roles in religio-political militancy. While traditional social structure and gendered hierarchies have been retained, public spaces have also been available to women to don more political and militant roles. This article looks at the multiple roles of women in the militancy in Kashmir and the discourses around them. Women's participation in the militancy has not found any mention in the nationalist narratives and Kashmiri women struggle to claim their share in the contemporary political discourse. Ambiguities remain about how the male-dominated Kashmiri nationalist and conflict discourse may have influenced inclusions and exclusions. Through a case study based on interviews conducted in Kashmir, this article argues that women's violent activities or their support to the militancy is altogether excluded or maneuvered to preserve existing gender norms and patriarchal traditions. This has dangerous implications as it tends to exclude women's voices in the peace processes.

The role of women in religio-political movements[2] has been subjected to a great deal of political and theological debates. Most of these movements adopt a conservative approach wherein women are not supposed to play any political role. However, in recent years women have made remarkable political contributions to religio-political projects and have even participated in a variety of militant activities, particularly as suicide bombers. Groups

Received 21 October 2009; accepted 29 August 2010.

This article is based on the author's extensive research through field trips to Kashmir in March 2007 and July 2008, where she interacted with and interviewed, among others: the founder and head of Dukhtaran-e-Millat, Asiya Andrabi; MKM chief Yasmeen Raja and other members; political activists Anjum Zamruda Habib, Farida Behenji and Hamida Nayeem, Missing Persons Activist Parveena Ahangar; several former (male) militants turned political activists; women police officers and trainees; police officers dealing with militancy in different parts of the Valley; army officers and soldiers, media persons, filmmakers, peace activists, scholars/academics, and journalists working in Kashmir; women judges and lawyers in the district court in Srinagar; women's and Human Rights NGOs; students at Kashmir University; common men and women in Kashmir and policy analysts and journalists in Delhi. The author thanks the Jebsen Center for Counter-Terrorism Studies at The Fletcher School, Tufts University for its support of the initial research project in 2007. Special thanks to the anonymous reviewers who provided extensive and constructive feedback on the earlier draft.

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such as the Hamas in Palestine started including women in their suicide militant operations amid a great deal of public debate. Sheikh Ahmad Yassin (founder and ideological leader of Hamas), had declared that no woman should be allowed to go out for *jihad* without a male chaperon, for which he was criticized by some in the Palestinian media. Popular pressure eventually forced Yassin to retract his critique, and Hamas has since embraced the idea of female suicide attackers. "Other conservatives groups, (including Al Qaeda) have also demonstrated some flexibility in this manner."[3]

It is significant to note that the participation of women in the political space and in militant *jihad* in many cases has altered the accepted theological positions on women's roles. During the early Islamic period women "participated in armed conflict either by organizing food and water and taking care of the wounded or through playing a crucial part in the actual fighting when needed."[4] An example often cited is that of Safiyya, an aunt of the Prophet, who defended a fortress in Medina during the battle of the trench and of Um 'Umara who nursed the wounded in the battle of Uhud but later also fought alongside four women companions and received 12 wounds.[5] The Prophet's wife Aisha also led an army against the fourth Caliph Ali. Most importantly women in early Islam were politically vigilant to ensure that the rulers were not deviating from established Islamic principles.[6] Moreover, very few were actual fighters, with most engaged in supporting roles as is suitably demonstrated in militant projects today.

One could argue that most theatres of conflict in contemporary times are witnessing religio-political violence. Iraq, Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir, and Afghanistan are places where religion forms a basis of nationalism, and women perform multiple roles in these theatres of conflict. "The radicals have been able to establish a fairly strong intellectual and religious case for women fighting."[7] The author's own study of Kashmir highlights the participation of women as planners, perpetrators, and patrons of militancy in a society that is otherwise known for its passivity and nonviolence. The conflict in Kashmir is more than fifty years old and has inseparable political and religious dimensions.[8] What interests the author is how, despite some recognition accorded to the Palestinian, Chechen, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) women as participants in militant activities, women in the Kashmir conflict have been excluded in the religious and nationalist discourse that they claim to be part of. Their silence/silencing has gone unnoticed for far too long and their politics has not even been acknowledged by feminists who claim to be speaking "of" and "for" marginalized women.

The Tragic Story of Kashmir

The conflict in Kashmir dates back to colonial history of the subcontinent and its subsequent partition in 1947 along religious lines. Kashmir was ruled by the Dogra rulers since 1846 when the Dogra King, Gulab Singh, was rewarded by the British for his neutrality in the Anglo-Sikh war. Gulab Singh bought Kashmir from the British for a sum of 75 lakh rupees and thus a Hindu ruling family was able to establish its supremacy in the Muslim dominated Kashmir Valley.[9] When the partition of India and Pakistan seemed inevitable, the then Maharajah of Kashmir, Hari Singh, chose to remain independent.[10] Matters became worse when tribal invaders from Pakistan, with the help of local insurgents and the Pakistani army waged what they called a "holy war" to save their Muslim brethren in Kashmir and took over the western areas,[11] within three months of Indian and Pakistani independence in August 1947. This was the first assault on non Muslims (Hindus and Sikhs in Kashmir) as Kashmir became part of a religio-political project and discourse. The Maharajah's troubles, on the other hand, were compounded by an armed rebellion and anti-Muslim violence

in Jammu. Amid frenzied diplomatic and political activity, the Maharajah (Hari Singh) consented to a formal accession to India and requested military help[12] as Indian troops marched to save Srinagar, the summer capital of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The National Conference, a political party under Sheikh Abdullah's leadership transformed into a popular militia whose armed volunteers assisted the Indian army in defending Srinagar from the Pakistani invaders.[13] A striking innovation during this time was the women's militia in conservative Kashmir and several hundred armed women (Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims) joined the militia and received arms training. But they were not involved in direct combat. Their main task was to defend themselves, their homes and families in the event of an attack and to assist the refugees.[14] This clearly suggests that Kashmiri women (of all religions) had in the past accepted arms training for self defense and participated in the armed conflict to provide assistance to their community and to defend themselves. Women's contribution to the militancy since the 1990s, therefore, is not a radical rupture from the past but an extension of role and responsibilities they had demonstrated in other violent situations in the past.

A few days after the Pakistani invaders were forced out of Kashmir, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru pledged to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir to confirm the accession, which was accepted in the UN Security Council Resolution 47. Nehru's decision has been considered a momentous diplomatic blunder in India's position on Kashmir. The plebiscite was never held as India claims that the conditions for the plebiscite were never met while Pakistan considers it an important part of the solution to the Kashmir dispute, not withstanding Kashmir's legal and valid accession to India.[15] The complex demography of Kashmir also compounds the conflict and the issue of the plebiscite.

The disputed princely state of Maharajah Hari Singh, which acceded to India included three major provinces: Jammu, which has a Hindu majority, Kashmir Valley, which has a Muslim majority and Ladakh, which is a Buddhist-dominated area. The Northern Areas comprising of Gilgit and Baltistan are sparsely populated and administered by Pakistan along with the western and north western areas of the former princely state, which were lost to Pakistan during the tribal invasion of 1947.[16] Aksai Chin, which was part of Ladakh and, therefore, part of the northern most areas of the princely state of Kashmir is administered by China and India alleges that China gained access to it after the 1963, Sino–Pakistani border agreement. This also remains part of the disputed territory of Kashmir. Apart from inter-state dimensions (involving India, Pakistan, and China) of the Kashmir conflict, intra-state dynamics between these different local and religious groups in the former princely state have exacerbated the conflict. India and Pakistan have fought three wars over Kashmir in 1947, 1965, and 1999 while China and India clashed over Aksai Chin in 1962.

Successive Indian governments had a tumultuous relationship with the state of Jammu and Kashmir even though Kashmir was accorded a special status under article 370 of the Indian constitution which guarantees special right and independent status to Kashmiris.[17] The first elections for the state of Jammu and Kashmir's constituent-cum-legislative assembly were held in 1951 and Sheikh Abdullah, leader of the National Conference, the largest political party in Kashmir, won a landslide victory. He had agitated against the Maharajah's rule and was in favor of the accession to India. But his uneasy relationship with the Indian government led to his imprisonment 1953, when it began to be speculated that he was spearheading Kashmir's independence from India. Subsequent elections—in 1957, 1962, and 1967—were widely regarded as fair democratic processes in Kashmir until Sheikh Abdullah's son Farooq Abdullah entered into an alliance with the Congress Party at the centre and won a landslide victory in the state elections of 1987, which were allegedly heavily rigged in his favor.

Kashmiri youth who participated in the 1987 elections were disillusioned by the unfair election process and decided to take the path of violence and militancy. This was also the time when the *mujahideen* from Afghanistan were turning their attention to the eastern areas following their victory against the Soviet forces. Once the soviets withdrew in 1989, and the atmosphere in Kashmir was politically charged, insurgency took its roots. The Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) was one of the first militant groups that demanded the independence of Kashmir from India. Several other militant groups joined the insurgency against the Indian state which was at its peak in the early 1990s but gradually began to subside toward the late 1990s. The events of 11 September 2001 and the rise of Islamist groups worldwide have led to an increase in militant activities in Kashmir and other parts of India from militants groups based in Pakistan occupied Kashmir. Intermittently, local residents have agitated against the Indian security forces, often pelting stones at them and participating in protest demonstrations in which women are at the forefront. While this article was being revised (between June–August 2010), pro independence agitation and demonstrations led to clashes between the local people and the Indian security forces in which more than one hundred people have lost their lives. It is not uncommon to see women leading these demonstrations and shouting slogans.

Wo jazba hi alag tha[18]

> I do not want to glorify the women by saying that we held guns and all that because this will create trouble for the women folk, for this reason only I do not want to say anything about women holding guns. Otherwise, I used to have a gun under my bed there is nothing great about it. At that time every locality used to have 2 to 3 militant (women), they used to have guns, and everyone used to know that so, it is an open secret.[19]

Militancy and terror tactics were introduced into the Kashmir conflict in 1989,[20] when the Afghan *jihad* had succeeded in driving away the Soviets from Afghanistan (*jihadis* could now turn their attention to Kashmir) and when discontent against the Indian state's polices and flawed democratic processes in Kashmir resulted in large-scale armed uprising. A significant number of organized militant groups based in Indian Kashmir and in Pakistan have carried out a steady campaign of terror against the Indian state, its security agencies, and unarmed Kashmiri/Indian civilians for nearly two decades.[21] While popular support for the militancy seems to have waned, and several former militants (men) have taken the political route,[22] the political voices of women have not found their due place in discourses about the conflict and Kashmiri nationalism. This is despite the widespread knowledge that women have not only suffered the most in the conflict but have also contributed significantly in the emergence of the nationalist/separatist narrative and the armed insurgency.

One of the earliest works that mapped the silencing of women's voices and their exclusion from political processes was Rita Manchanda's "Guns and *Burqa*: Women in the Kashmiri Conflict."[23] Almost a decade has passed since Manchanda articulated the silences around Kashmiri women's politics and their multiple roles and experiences which still continue to haunt the Kashmiri society and polity. The present author's interest in engaging with women's roles during the Kashmiri armed insurgency of the 1990s as well as their continued participation in the militancy now which has become a hydra headed monster, stems from the author's feminist curiosity that rests on primarily two research questions.

1. Women in Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Palestine, and Chechnya and more recently in Iraq have participated in a wide range of militant activities including suicide bombings and armed combat. Did women have/ continue to have any kind of a role in the armed militancy in Kashmir?
2. Given that Kashmiri men have claimed their contribution and sacrifices to the nationalist narrative, through their participation in the armed struggle, and have therefore, legitimized their roles as peace makers, and political representatives of the Kashmiri people, what happens to women who wish to claim similar legitimacy and political spaces? In other words, what are the processes that serve to exclude and marginalize women in the politics of Kashmir?

This article further highlights the ways in which women have played their part in the militant struggle in Kashmir and continue to do so. It does this by tracing the history of women's involvement in the armed struggle. It then discusses the presence of groups such as the Dukhtaran e-Millat and the Muslim Khawateen Markaz (both exclusively women's groups in terms of leadership and membership). The third section highlights the gendered roles of women in the armed militancy, as mothers. The article concludes with an analysis of how women's militant activities continue to be marginalized, and what the implications of such marginalization are in the effort to understand militant movements, nationalist narratives, and peace processes.

The present author borrows Rita Manchanda's assessment of the three phases of the Kashmiri conflict that have witnessed multiple forms of women's militant engagements and political activism.[24] In phase one of the militancy, a euphoria and common ideology united men and women alike for a cause that seemed just and worth fighting for—the creation of an independent Kashmir. Women participated in large numbers leading public protests against the state and the army. Manchanda calls this an empowering phase for women when they gained access to public spaces. Women came out vociferously in favor of the militancy, raising slogans about "azaadi" and singing praises of the *mujahideen*. A common slogan of the times that women still remember and was often quoted during the author's field work was *aye mard-e-mujahid jag zara, ab waqt-e shahadat aaya hai* (O holy warriors arise and awake, the time for martyrdom has come!)[25] They sheltered militants in their homes, cooked for them, and took care of them, all the while nurturing nationalist aspirations like the Kashmiri men. Between 1990 and 1992, a number of young Kashmiri women even travelled across the border to Pakistan to receive training in arms and ammunitions but there is no information about whether they actually participated in armed attacks. Asiya Andrabi, the founding head of the Dukhtaran-e -Millat[26] told the present author that she had dissuaded women from going to Pakistan for arms training as women could serve the *jihad* better from their homes. Manchanda has also highlighted the highly gendered roles of women as they were mobilized during the first phase of the conflict.[27]

In phase two of the militancy, disillusionment had set in—especially among women who had suffered—and this was the time when women began to speak against the militancy and its damaging impact on their lives. Women's ideological and logistical support to the militancy started to decline in the late 1990s, after the militants took to petty crimes in the Kashmir Valley and began to exploit the people for personal gain. The response of the Indian state after initial setbacks was also quite harsh and security forces cracked down with a heavy hand. By this time, battle fatigue was clearly visible, and several indigenous youth began to opt out of militancy to look for political solutions to the Kashmir issue. Militants also surrendered to the security forces in the Valley and became renegades, while many others were captured or killed in encounters. Like in every conflict, women in Kashmir

were most affected by the armed militancy caught "between two guns," as Manchanda suggests.[28] Not only had these women lost family members and bread earners, but they were also subjected to worst kinds of humiliation through rape and violence by Indian security agencies. Many women were also exploited by the *mujahideen* and were forced into marriages. Women had to assume multiple identities, which included earning for the family and managing survival in the everyday violence.[29]

Manchanda talks about a third stage that brought with it a shift to political processes and consolidation of the Hurriyat especially in the late 1990s.[30] However, the present author's understanding of the conflict and fieldwork in 2007–2008 suggests that the rise of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and the political instability in Pakistan was once again reflected by a rise in militant activities in the Kashmir Valley. The *jihadi* campaign has spilled over to other parts of India as militant groups have acquired greater resource capacity to inflict damage and destruction and are better networked.[31] Groups such as the Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed have targeted civilians and important cultural and political symbols in other parts of India like the Red Fort and Parliament House in Delhi, hotels, trains, railway stations, and international cafés in Mumbai. The most daring of such terror attacks was the Mumbai massacre in November 2008 when a series of high profile targets were attacked by guns and grenades in a well-coordinated operation by the Lashkar-e-Toiba *jihadi* militants from Pakistan.[32] This unique militant operation lasted three days as Indian Black Cat Commandos struggled to free civilians who had been taken hostage by the militants. Nearly 173 people died and more than 300 were injured in the attacks.

Women's roles in militant activities, *jihadi* ideology, and separatist politics in Kashmir have resurfaced since 2004, when all women's political organizations such as the Dukhtaran-e-Millat (DeM), Daughters of Faith, and the Muslim Khawateen Markaz (MKM) have once again become active. Large-scale mobilization of women was also visible in the Amarnath Shrine Board agitation in 2008, when Kashmiris were protesting the government's decision to hand over certain land area along the Amaranth pilgrimage to the Shrine Board to construct temporary shelters for the Hindu pilgrims. Kashmiri Muslims argued that India was conspiring to change the demography of Kashmir and was engaging in Israeli type settlement politics. Women were at the forefront of the protests, as the author watched during a field visit at that time (July 2008). In a curious development, mothers who lost their sons in the resistance (who died in police firing) were publicly honored as mothers of martyrs by Hurriyat leader, Yasin Malik,[33] thereby suggesting that the discourse of martyrdom and motherhood, as discussed later in this article, was far from over in the Kashmir conflict. Since 2001, reports on the direct involvement of women in militant groups and their training in the militant camps in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir have also come to light. This, the author argues, marks phase four of the militancy, when women have once again come out openly and even covertly in support of the militancy. Compared to phase one, there are fewer women visible this time, but with more direct and varied engagement with militant groups and as politically active as before.

Yahan kya chalega? Nizam e Mustafa[34]

Militant groups operating in Kashmir and based either in Pakistan, or in Indian-administered Kashmir have always had conservative religious overtones. Although it is often stated that insurgency was spearheaded by indigenous and "secular" groups such as the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), the religious underpinning lay in constructing non Muslims as the "other."[35] Many Indian journalists, writers, and analysts, who have followed the Kashmir armed movement since it began, have also consistently argued that

the Kashmiri movement is an Islamic movement with a strong religious ideology.[36] That the movement began with support and inspiration from the Afghan *mujahideen*, who had forced the Russian forces to withdraw and now turned their attention to Pakistan's eastern frontiers, also suggests the religio-political character of this insurgency. Syed Ali Shah Geelani, the elderly separatist leader with one of the largest followings has been quoted as saying "*We are Pakistanis and Pakistan is us because we are tied with the country through Islam*." Kashmiris also can often been heard sloganeering, "Hum Pakistani hain, Pakistan hamara hai" (We are Pakistanis, Pakistan is ours).[37]

Al Qaeda has declared Kashmir as the gateway of *jihad* against India. Claiming presence in Jammu and Kashmir, an Al Qaeda tape received by the Srinagar-based Kashmir News Service (KNS) criticized the Hurriyat Conference, based in Kashmir and the Muttahida Jihad Council, based in Pakistan controlled Muzaffarabad, of misleading the Kashmiris.[38] In this ensuing tension between the "global" Al Qaeda ideology and the "local" values of *Kashmiriyat,*[39] it is worthwhile to note that militancy in Kashmir is of local origins, and for a cause that the indigenous people feel strongly about. However, a change in strategy adopted by militant groups includes their adherence to the pan-Islamic ideology, or what has been effectively referred to by Jason Burke as "Al Qaedaism."[40] This global-local tension has affected the ways in which women have tried to articulate their political voices and, more specifically, their support for militant activities. Militant groups opposed to the idea of the involvement of women in the militancy have paradoxically and consistently mobilized and relied on women's popular support in their gendered and cultural roles as wives, sisters, and importantly as mothers.

The first people who were targeted by the militants in the Valley were Kashmiri Pandits, a Hindu minority who ultimately fled their homes and are now living in refugee camps in Jammu and other nearby areas. The Kashmiri Muslims view the Pandit exodus from the Valley as a willful political decision implemented through government support provided by Governor Jagmohan's regime.[41] Most Kashmiri Muslims articulate this idea without an attempt to debate why a financially and professionally successful community such as the Pandits's would willingly leave their homes in the exotic Kashmir Valley to live in shanty refugee camps. One interviewee particularly mentioned that the Pandits had always been educational elites of Kashmir and were always pro establishment, sabotaging the efforts of Kashmiri Muslims instead of joining their voices.[42]

The Pandits, on the other hand, have their own stories of how their lives changed overnight when the Islamist insurgency broke out in 1989. The Pandit women as also Kashmiri Muslim women with whom the author also talked, mentioned the cordial relations between the two communities before 1989. Women talked of shared culture, tradition, and language, which were under attack when the militants began to threaten the Kashmiri Pandits living in the Valley. The author's interactions with Kashmiri Pandits in Jammu revealed bitterness and anger at how they had been forced to leave their homes due to the threats and killings. Many notable Kashmiri Pandits were killed by the militants. Seema Kazi quotes Pandit women who talk about the threats they received and how they left their villages. The women mentioned posters and threatening letters they received from the JKLF and the Hizbul Mujahideen militant groups.[43]

In the initial phase of the militancy that began in 1989, militant groups set up specialized wings to train women and enlist their ideological and logistical support. The militants thrived on support from women in various forms and were aware that without enlisting the support of women the militancy would not acquire legitimacy or popularity. Women alone could convince the world outside of the need for violent resistance to the state.[44] As one of the interviewees recalled,

> The common women of Kashmir also contributed to the movement. The movement has been recognized internationally only because of the contribution of Kashmiri women. The men folk of the houses could undertake militancy only because the women of the house stepped up to undertake all the responsibilities. The women have made bigger sacrifices for the movement if you see that each male member is some one's husband or brother, son, or the breadwinner of the family was given to the movement, so this is a movement of the women. I do not know how it cannot be called women's movement. (Interview July 2008)

Militancy in Kashmir has mainly generated two kinds of gendered responses. Women have borne the brunt of it as militants impose their own ideologies and social and religious *diktats* particularly on women. While there is an abundance of data available on the human rights abuses of women by the security agencies of the state, there is a virtual absence of a discourse on the violations carried out by militants. As Seema Kazi notes, "it is difficult to obtain reliable information regarding violence and sexual abuse by militants because civilians are reluctant to speak of it for fear of reprisal."[45] One interviewee who had served in the militancy admitted that "when we started the widows documentations there were around 19 to 20 thousands women, which included people killed not only by security forces but also by militants. It is not that only one side had killed innocent people; both sides had indulged in killing innocent people" (Interview 2008). Moreover, the military contest between the security agencies of the state and the militants has unleashed a "masculinist social environment" that has subjected women to greater social policing and control and regressive versions of 'Islamic' identity."[46] The other kind of gendered response has been the involvement of women in the militancy, which as the study of various militants groups has shown, has been within the confines of their accepted gendered roles—as wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters, which is discussed further.

Women's militant activities rarely find a discussion in the mainstream discourses of militancy in Kashmir. The discomfort at any kind of suggestion that women did/do participate in the militancy is so rampant that anytime a Kashmiri woman is caught by the security agencies as an overground operative of any of the militant groups, the local media clamors to establish her innocence and unearths her tragic personal saga. The matter may be *sub judice* but the verdict of innocence is passed through the local media. "Women have been the worst sufferers of the Kashmiri conflict and have had no role in the armed struggle," men always told the author in interviews. An interesting anecdote in this regard is the author's field work in which she would always be introduced in Srinagar as a researcher working on "women and conflict" even though she would always make it clear that she was interested in "women's roles in the armed militancy."

Women have participated in the militancy even as they have borne the brunt of it but very few authors have engaged with women's militant activities.[47] Some women are also apparently undergoing religious indoctrination and arms training in the *madrassas* and camps of various militant groups like Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Toiba. One newspaper in 2007 cited an Indian intelligence report claiming a 21-day training for the Lashkar's Women's brigade, which included, "armed training swimming and jihadi discourses."[48] It is important to clarify that female armed combatants have not been found in significant numbers in Kashmir despite reports about their training in Pakistan. The author's interest has been to document the multiple ways in which women have contributed to the militancy in Kashmir and the silences that have been at work. It is also worth noting that female militants and operatives include women from both sides of the Line of Control (LoC)[49] (i.e., Pakistani and Indian Kashmiri Muslim women).

Asiya Andrabi and the Dukhtaran-e-Millat

The article now turns to a discussion on the activities of the Dukhtaran-e-Millat (DeM) and the Muslim Khawateen Markaz (MKM). The DeM, an all-women's radical Islamist group, was founded in 1981 by Asiya Andrabi, an educated Kashmiri woman and began as a reform movement to educate Muslim women about Islam and their rights.[50] Gradually, the group took to moral policing, especially enforcing the *burqa*, and advocating support for *jihad* and the cause of Islam in Kashmir and elsewhere. This group has become increasingly active in the recent past and appeals to women to support the *mujahideen* waging *jihad* in Kashmir in the name of Islam. It operates in the Kashmir Valley and has been forced to go underground several times with the state governments in Kashmir banning its activities. By 1987, when the state government of Dr. Farooq Abdullah was in power in Jammu and Kashmir, Andrabi and her colleagues assumed a more political role, demanding reserved seats for women in buses and public transport.[51] Their efforts were rebuffed by the government. In 1988–89, when the insurgency in Kashmir began, the DeM began to advocate the cause of *jihad* and appealed to women to assume responsibilities in the private space of home and family and support the *mujahideen*. Andrabi also claims to have been successful in restraining a number of young women from travelling to Pakistan to receive training in armed combat in Pakistan-based militant camps. The DeM's history is marked by bans, arrests of its activists under the Public Safety Act, and the subsequent underground activities of Andrabi and her followers between 1990–2004.

The DeM can be categorized as a radical religious group that uses coercion and illegal means, including the use of threats, to impose a conservative Islamic way of life on the women in Kashmir. In its moral policing activities, the DeM targets locations that are supposedly the hubs of "immoral" activities, such as cafes, restaurants, liquor shops, hotels, internet cafes, and even gift shops. The members of this group advocate strict segregation and distinct gendered roles for men and women based on what they claim to be the fundamental tenets of Islam. Viewing the Kashmir issue as primarily a religious one, the group also seeks the accession of the state of Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan and provides logistical and ideological support to militant groups with the same agenda. There is no evidence to suggest that the DeM engages in direct armed struggle; however, Andrabi told the author in an interview that women may take up arms and even suicide bombings if necessary, adding that there were adequate men to fight in the *jihad* for Kashmir.[52]

Andrabi has always claimed (in several media appearances and interviews) that the objective of DeM is to help "Kashmiri women fight for their rights conferred on them by Islam."[53] However, a closer study of the group's activities and public declarations and speeches by Andrabi reveals that the group has political aspirations and acts as a support system for the *jihadi* militant groups in the Kashmir Valley. The DeM has provided logistical support to militant groups by acting as couriers of messages, funds, and weapons for Lashkar-e-Jabbar (LeJ), Al-Mansoorian and the Jamait-ul-Mujahideen (JuM), and Hizbul Mujahideen (HM). Andrabi is the wife of jailed JuM commander Qasim Faktu, and she herself was also held for facilitating the channeling of funds from Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) to the JuM. The DeM has also been referred to as the women's wing of the Jamaat-i-Islami, exporting thousands of Muslim girls to the same camps in the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir that are manned by Sudanese, Saudis, and Afghans.[54] A U.S. State Department report of 1995 held a DeM activist responsible for a parcel bomb blast at the BBC office in Srinagar in which one person was killed and another two injured.[55]

Since 2004, the DeM has been working specifically with separatist and hard-line militant groups like the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) to enforce the Islamic code of conduct in

the Kashmir Valley. The LeJ had announced in 2001 that it would begin to use violence against Kashmiri Muslims who were not dressed in their version of Islamic dress codes. On 7 August 2001, the group had thrown acid on two women in Srinagar on grounds that they were not dressed in appropriate Islamic clothes, and had issued a deadline for women to don the *burqa* by September 2001. Even though women in Kashmir have resisted the attempts and ignored the *diktats* of groups such as the LeJ, the DeM members continue their efforts in moral policing of women. Andrabi herself is never seen in public without her full black *burqa* and gloves. In addition to its moral policing activities, the DeM operates schools across Jammu and Kashmir as part-time *madrassas* exclusively for girls and women, where the Quran and Arabic are taught. Vociferous in her support for the militants and for Kashmir's accession to Pakistan, Andrabi maintains that she and her group are not involved in the "practical militancy" and provide only "moral support to the *mujahideen*."[56]

Also significant to note is the evidence of logistical support that Andrabi and the DeM's *burqa*-clad members provide to the militants. They are said to be involved in gun-running. A female officer in the counterinsurgency unit of the Jammu and Kashmir police claimed, "They use the anonymity provided by the burqa to hide weapons and manage to move it unchecked past the Indian security forces."[57] It is in fact alleged that the DeM promotes the imposition of the *burqa* not merely to impose an Islamic ideology, but also to aid militants.[58] By late 2006, the DeM claimed 500 active members in Kashmir and thousands of sympathizers throughout Kashmir, Pakistan, the United States, and Europe.[59] Even though its numbers may still be small, the DeM does not participate in conventional politics, making it difficult to assess its capabilities. Its failure to gain widespread support for its social views suggests that it has limited potential to develop a wider ideological support system for itself or its allied organizations. However, its impact cannot be overlooked and easily dismissed. Even though Andrabi's coercive *burqa* campaign is supposed to have failed, fact is that sales of *burqas* have gone up in the last few years and more *burqas* are found now than ever before. Several regular visitors to Kashmir have commented on the conservative Islamist ideology replacing the liberal values of Sufi Islam.

Asiya Andrabi, the founding head of the DeM, is a unique voice of a militant supporter of *jihad*, taking *jihad* to the Kashmiri Muslim women. In her role as founder and leader of DeM, she advocates that *jihad* is mandatory for all Muslims in the prevailing international scenario and advocates a pan-Islamic state where Islam is the only basis of identity and nationalism. She rejects the notion of territorial nationalism and advocates the need for the Muslim *umma* to be united as one nation. Mullah Omar and Osama bin Laden are the role models for her sons, in her own words, and waging *jihad* is more important than modern professions like medicine or engineering.[60] She told the author in an interview that she would look forward to her sons waging *jihad* in the cause of Islam. The cause of Islam is dear to her, as she expresses her support for the *mujahideen* who are engaged in *jihad* against the Indian state. India has illegally held on to Kashmir, she says, and the future of Kashmir is in its accession to Pakistan (not forgetting to mention that Pakistan had also disappointed the Kashmiris in the last few years by siding with imperialist and anti-Islamic America).[61]

Andrabi hardly fits the stereotypical image of a militant. Dressed in simple spartan clothes and the mandatory Islamic head covering, she is the perfect hostess, warm and generous, every time the author has met her. She appears to be a typical, middle-aged Kashmiri Muslim woman facing the challenges of life and raising her two sons alone as her husband languishes in the Srinagar Central Jail on life imprisonment. But she manages to convey strong political sentiments and radical religious views even through her soft-spoken tone and composed exterior in her fluent Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, and English. The

essence of "Kashmiriyat," or the distinct Kashmiri identity, has no place in Andrabi's pan-Islamist world view, as she clearly says she does not believe in an Indian or even Pakistani nationality. She has in the past rejected her Kashmiri identity, claiming Arabic descent via ancestors who were not from Kashmir, but came from Arabia to Central Asia.[62] She also told the author, "I believe in Muslim unity. There is no nation in Islam, and Muslims should not be divided into countries."[63]

Andrabi and her group have had a definite impact on Kashmiri society. She has created a niche in radical Islamist and even feminist discourses in Kashmir, with her emphasis on women's rights. She emphasized her liberal-feminist leanings as she explained how she initially refused to marry, and even when she consented to parental demands, she made it clear that she would not stop her "activism" and that her husband needed to be understanding of her desire to stand for Islam and the women in Kashmir. She married a *mujahid*, a commander of the militant group JuM. She also retains her maiden name, and did not take her husband's name after her marriage. Arrests and opposition have not deterred her even as she single-handedly manages her organization's day-to-day operations as well as her own household and the raising of her two sons. Andrabi talks about the worldwide rise of *jihadi* sentiments among Muslims and is hopeful that the Caliphate will unite the Muslim *umma* worldwide into one nation of believers. Even if this does not happen during her lifetime, she is convinced that the future generations would benefit from the *jihadi* ideology. Andrabi mentions her contacts with militants in Kashmir and Pakistan and also with ideological leaders in other parts of the world, in her interviews with the author. She has been arrested several times, along with several members of her organization, under the Public Safety Act.

The Muslim Khawateen Markaz and Other Women's Groups

Apart from the DeM, there are other hard-line militant groups operating in Kashmir that have set up female wings to train women and enlist their ideological and logistical support. Among the other groups, the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), a hard-line separatist outfit, floated a women's wing called Muslim Khawateen Markaz (MKM) to enlist support of women for their cause. JKLF's women's wing was active in both Indian and Pakistani Kashmir. In the Indian part of Kashmir, the Khawateen Markaz arranged large rallies and protest demonstrations, aided injured militants and even carried guns for the *mujahideen*. This was corroborated by Anjum Zamruda Habib, whom the author met in 2008. She had been an MKM member and has even served a jail sentence on charges of siphoning funds to militant groups. She was apparently sent by All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) chairman Abdul Ghani Bhatt to meet the charge d'affaires of the Pakistan High Commission, Jaleel Abbas Geelani. On 2 June 2003, she was caught with 307,000 Indian Rupees in cash (approx. US $7,500).[64] She insists that she was implicated by members of her own organization, who sabotaged her career. She maintains her innocence on grounds that she was invited to conferences in Bangkok, Pakistan, and the United States and the money found on her was meant for the purchase of ten computers and to pay for her visa fees.[65] After her release from jail she has been working on women's issues in Kashmir. Anjum stated that women of the MKM were definitely involved in the militancy although the women did not take up arms themselves.[66]

Anjum denied that the MKM was dependent on the JKLF and said that it had its own organization and constitution. The JKLF link was made because of the involvement of several women whose male family members were associated with the JKLF (Interview 2008). MKM's main activities included assisting the militants and enlisting support of

the women for the militant cause *azadi* (independence). They also carried guns for the militants and assisted the JKLF group who kidnapped Rubaiya Sayeed, the daughter of Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, the Home Minister of India on 8 December 1989. Sayeed was later released in exchange for the freedom of five militants who were in Indian prisons. The members of MKM were involved in saving Shaikh Hamid, the founder member of the JKLF, when he was injured, taking him to hospital and later keeping him in a safe house of an MKM cadre. The Markaz is still active in Kashmir and now represents the women's wing of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC). However, when the author interviewed present MKM chairperson Yasmeen Raja, and other members at her office, she was constantly interrupted by a male secretary appointed by the Hurriyat. He spoke on their behalf and never left them alone with the author, thereby suggesting that the MKM's political agenda is controlled by the Hurriyat.[67]

The Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), one of the largest militant groups in Kashmir, has a cadre base drawn from mostly indigenous and some foreign sources. It is one of the most important militant outfits in terms of its effectiveness in perpetrating violence across the state at regular intervals. The HM also established a women's wing, the Binat-ul-Islam, led by Umi-Arifa. Members of this group would visit families of slain militants and assist with logistics. The Dukhtaran-e-Millat has also been alleged to be serving as the women's wing of the HM.[68]

Indian security forces arrested a woman, Khalida Akhtar, who was a Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) operative, on 19 September 2006. Her interrogation revealed a terror story where LeT-trained women were being infiltrated into Kashmir to attack Indian security forces.[69] The Lashkar-e-Toiba, had stated in 2001 that it would organize arms and ideological training for Kashmiri and Pakistani women. A newspaper later claimed that it had access to intelligence reports suggesting that Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) had a full-fledged training camp for women militants situated six kilometers from Muridke on GT Road between Lahore and Rawalpindi, with infrastructure to provide rigorous training to cadres in guerrilla warfare. The report claimed that women militants are given twenty-one days' training in handling arms and ammunition and swimming. The special course, called *Daura-e-Sofa,* is provided to women cadres drawn from madrasas in Pakistani Kashmir and the Kashmir Valley in India.[70] However, senior journalist and author, Praveen Swami denied these claims.

> In neither at Daura-e-Aam nor Daura-e-Khaas there are women who they actually seem to be training. The women seem to be recruited based more on kinship basis, that guy's sister, that guy's mother or that guy's wife, through the network. Hafiz Saed's[71] wife is quite sort of involved in these women's gatherings but the Lashkar's literature does not seem to really allow the possibility that the women might be involved in combat roles. (Interview 2009)

Another woman to actually serve a jail sentence on charges of being a militant has been Farida Dar, whose brother was Bilal Beg, the militant leader of the outfit, Ikhwan-ul-Muslimeen. She was charged as a co-accused in the Lajpat Nagar, Delhi bomb blast and has been held guilty in a recent court judgment.[72] When the author met her in July 2008, in Sri Nagar, her story was narrated in her presence by an activist of her organization, Jammu Kashmir Mass Movement. Farida is referred to as Behenji by the members of her organization and is a mother figure, who heads an organization where the membership is exclusively male.

The Conundrum of Suicide Bombings in Kashmir

In October 2005, a 22-year-old Kashmiri woman named Yasmeena blew herself up at Awantipora on the Srinagar-Jammu highway, indicating that women were perhaps being trained as suicide bombers by the militant outfits in Kashmir. Parts of the bomb were found attached to her body, and it is still debated whether she was intending to blow herself up as a suicide bomber or she was merely acting as a courier of bombs that accidentally exploded. The Jaish-e-Mohammed militant group later claimed that Yasmeena was their suicide bomber. She was a member of the organization's women's wing, Banaat-e-Ayesha, and was even married to a militant of the Jaish.[73] However, most Kashmiris believe that Yasmeena was not a suicide bomber and the explosives on her body went off accidentally. She was perhaps acting as the courier for those explosives, since suicide bombings have not been a popular form of militant attack in Kashmir or in any other part of India.

In Kashmir, there have been no incidents of suicide attacks like in Iraq, Palestine, Sri Lanka, or Chechnya, where bombs are strapped to the bodies of attackers. The most popular form of militant strategy (and closest to a suicide attack) by Kashmiri militant groups has been the *fidayeen* attacks, especially carried out by the Lashkar-e-Toiba, the blatant example of which was seen in Mumbai in November 2008. *Fidayeen*, do not attach bombs to their bodies but fight with guns, explosives and grenades only to embrace martyrdom in the event of capture. *Fidayeen* also try to escape once their act is over. All *fidayeens* involved in the Mumbai attacks were killed in the operation except for one, Ajmal Kasab who was caught by the Mumbai police and is now under interrogation.

This prompts another feminist question; why have suicide bombings (which invariably allow women to be easily manipulated by men, sometimes, or allow women to express their "political" and "personal") not been popularized in the context of the militancy in Kashmir? Suicide bombings as a tactic have been an important weapon for militant groups all over the world. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka were masters of this tactic and carried out several political assassinations and attacks through suicide missions of their elite Black Tiger cadres consisting of several women. Others who have practiced suicide bombings include the Lebanese Hezbollah, Chechens, Palestinians, and Al Qaeda and its affiliated groups like the Jemaah Islamiah in Indonesia. While some claim that about 30 percent of Muslim suicide bombers in contemporary world conflicts are women,[74] Kashmiri women have not blown themselves up for their cause. Iraq, Palestine, Chechnya, and Sri Lanka are examples of indigenous struggle and resistance against occupation, and all of them deploy suicide bombings as a tactic against the state and civilians. In the same genre of anti-state resistance movements against perceived occupation, the Kashmir case is an example of organized, sustained armed militancy, supported by an external network and motivated by both local and global ideologies.

A large number of armed volunteers were recruited in the beginning of the *jihad* campaign in Kashmir. Along with the indigenous Kashmiri youth, volunteers from Pakistan and Afghanistan also enlisted with the militant groups. Moreover, the mercenaries who had fought in the Afghan *jihad* also found gainful employment in Kashmir once the anti-India Movement started. Sporadic acts of terror targeted at civilians and the state apparatus are backed by a sustained armed guerrilla struggle in Kashmir. As DeM chief Andrabi told the author in an interview, "there are enough *mujahideen* to carry forward the *jihad*. There is no need for suicide bombings as yet."[75] Pakistan still continues to sponsor the militancy in Kashmir and in India by providing monetary and logistical support and large numbers of Pakistani nationals are directly involved in attacks. In fact, most militant training camps and *jihadi madrassas* are located in Pakistani occupied Kashmir as also in other parts

of Pakistan.[76] All this means that there is never dearth of men to participate in militant activities, perhaps a major reason why women may have not become armed combatants. Moreover, the *fidayeen* attacks in Kashmir have been a viable strategy and have reaped successes in recent years.

Most targets in Jammu and Kashmir are army camps, police stations, and paramilitary forces. Potential suicide bombers—especially female bombers in civilian clothes—would have difficulty in accessing these targets. In fact, militants often disguise themselves as army personnel to carry out their attacks.[77] This explains why local people are unwilling to accept that militants also kill civilians and rape women. They easily pointed out the atrocities and human rights violations of the security forces during the author's field work but the militants can do no wrong in their eyes. After the large-scale exodus of Sikh and Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley, militants have not found easy targets among their own brethren. It is a fact that thousands of Kashmiri Muslim civilians have lost their lives in attacks and counterattacks waged between militants and security forces and militant groups have now shifted their focus to civilian population in other major cities across India.

In recent years, indigenous support to the militancy has declined, and battle fatigue is visible. Traditionally the Kashmiri Muslims have been a nonviolent community largely influenced by Sufi teachings. They would not have been able to sustain the armed militancy without Pakistan's backing and involvement of mercenary cadres. As one former militant (now political activist and writer) told the author in an interview, "we are not a warrior race like the Pathans or Afghans. Even when some of us were militants, that kind of physical strain used to tire us out."[78] Large numbers of Kashmiris who have lost members of their family in the conflict are now looking toward a political solution. There is growing realization that militancy has not yielded any dividends. Lack of sufficient indigenous backing for militant activities has also resulted in virtually no support for suicide bombings as a tactic, least of all those potentially conducted by women. Suicide bombings are usually a response to a new situation in settings where they are used; however, in Kashmir, new developments are virtually nonexistent, in contrast to places like Iraq and Afghanistan. Hence, there has been no import of this tactic.

Even though in traditional Kashmiri society women enjoyed visibility in public spaces, the conservative religious ideology advocated by militant groups has attempted to deny women a public presence, while making use of their voices for their cause. Most militant groups follow strict Islamic codes of conduct and are against the visibility of women in the public sphere. Women who have been part of these militant support networks also serve the conservative ideology.[79] Together, these attitudes account for little future likelihood of women volunteering for or being forced into suicide bombings. DeM leader, Asiya Andrabi, is of the view that, Kashmiri women will, if needed, conduct suicide bombings like the Arab, Iraqi, and Chechen women. Now that even Al Qaeda has sanctioned the role of women in *jihad* as suicide bombers,[80] it would not be a surprise if radical Islamist militant groups operating in Kashmir recruit women as suicide bombers, further extending their exaltation of the virtues of a mother sacrificing for the cause of Islam. The "motherhood narrative" could come to their rescue if they seek means to justify the role of women as martyrs for a "just" cause.

Hum sab maayen hain[81]

Pakistan jayenge
Do roti khayenge

> *Pet mein mujahid leke aayenge!*
> (We shall go to Pakistan; We shall eat two chapatis; We shall get *mujahid* in our wombs!)[82]

Pakistan is part of the nostalgia women feel especially those who have affinity with its Islamic identity. Pakistan is also thought of (in this slogan), as the land of the *mujahid* (militants) as most of the early militants received training and instructions in Pakistan and came from there. *Do roti khayenge* is the reminder of the hardships and difficulties in the path of the liberation struggle. Most significant is the last line of this slogan which combines issues of sexuality, nationalism, and motherhood. For women to shout slogans about who they would mate with so as to best serve the movement marks a departure from the asexual, private, and invisible women that gendered norms perpetuated but this is tempered by reinstating the gender norm through ideal mothers who would carry *mujahid* in their wombs. The motherhood narrative is idealized in this slogan, which establishes the sacrifices women were ready to make especially in their roles as mothers. Many in Kashmir recalled the slogan of the 1990s,[83] *Ay mard-e-mujahid jaag zara, ab waqt-e-shahadat aaya hai* (O holy warriors rise and awake. The time for your martyrdom has come); women in their different roles, imploring the men to fight and embrace martyrdom for the cause. As Seema Kazi argues, "Although this particular articulation centred on a (gendered) binary of sacrificing mothers and heroic sons, most women need not necessarily have had male kin affiliated to militant groups."[84] The *jazba* or the passion for the freedom movement has always been high among the Kashmiri women.

Among the various reasons why women support and participate in militancy is a strong sense of ideological motivation especially in their roles as mothers. Motherhood is a much venerated aspect of a woman's life and South Asia is particularly rife with stories of valiant, courageous, and even scheming mothers who have played major roles in politics, wars, and revolutions. Mothers acted as regents to young kings[85] and were the ideological backbone of political projects.[86] A woman's power, authority, and to a large extent even identity is realized through her role as a mother and hence the social norm and expectation of every woman is to have a male child, which elevates her to a higher status. "A woman's staying at home and looking after home and children is equivalent to *jihad*. Her status is that of a martyr who dies while fighting for Allah."[87]

The motherhood narrative, therefore, plays an important role in providing popular legitimacy to the Kashmiri armed movement and in the mobilization of women by the militant groups. Rita Manchanda mentions how militarized motherhood became common folklore as stories did rounds of a mother "who puts henna on the hands of her son and sends him off not to a bride but to fight a holy war; a martyr's mother who refuses to mourn at her son's funeral."[88] In the early years of the militancy women would come out spontaneously to sing the *wanuwan*[89] together singing praises of the *mujahid* (militant). "Heavily swathed in *burqas* or in voluminous head scarves, mothers, wives and daughters came poring out into the streets, their voices joining those of the men in the cry for *azadi*."[90]

A former militant whom the author had the chance to interview shared very insightful comments on motherhood,

> I got my feelings from a mother and wherever you have seen it the mothers are most proud about nationalism, in folk lore you will see that boys (I won't say men I say boys) get inspired from what they hear from their mothers. In the folk lore about the heroes and the tales about the mujahids howsoever you describe it. So, you get the passion, you may not get the reason from the mother. That

> passion transferred from your mother is for everyone to see. If the mother is passionate about the cause, the cause will find more and more people joining the movement. (Interview 2008)

The movement becomes a legitimate cause as "mothers" become the gendered revolutionary bridges. The former militant who now works as an educationist said.

> Once you remove the mothers it affects the functioning of the militants, the pressure starts building upon them. So if you remove the mother you remove the social sanctity. If your mother is with you it is but natural that your sister is with you. If women folk are helping you in the cause, they are the most who push you and once they feel that the cause is of no worth they may help you to get back. (Interview 2008)

The women that the author interacted with also often spoke of the role of the mother including themselves. Asiya Andrabi is keen to portray herself as a good mother to her two sons and says quite openly that it is the job of women to raise good *mujahid* and take care of the family. Women should not work and be seen in public places as men are supposed to provide for them, Andrabi argues, but does not quite explain her own "work" and political activism. The case of Asiya Andrabi suggests that certain accepted forms of femininities (motherhood predominantly) are mobilized in the militancy.[91] She is one of the gendered public voices of political Islam in Kashmir. Her politics is played out outside the home and family, but she must uphold the ideals of a good Muslim woman—as the care-giver and nurturer within the family—even while supporting the *mujahideen*. Hameeda Nayeem, a political activist, while discussing the role of women in the militancy asks, "Women have given their best, the dearest thing of their lives, their sons, isn't that their contribution?" Many women, whose sons were martyred, did not weep but bought almonds, walnuts, and sweets and threw them on their bodies, saying that the son died for the nation, died or a cause. Many mothers called for celebrations after their sons were martyred, remembers Hameeda.

After the Amarnath Shrine Board agitation, Yasin Malik[92] handed out *Shahid Maqbool Butt*[93] award to the mothers of those young boys who were killed in the agitation in Srinagar in 2008. The mothers said interesting things like they were guaranteed a good place in paradise so there was no problem in giving up their sons. They would meet them again in heaven.[94] Well known journalist, Praveen Swami, who has been covering the conflict since it began argues that the *Jihadist* discourse has become wider and more acceptable as earlier it was unusual to hear a Kashmiri mother openly express happiness and joy on her son's martyrdom. It was common to blame the security forces for the killing of "innocent" boys and deny their involvement in the militancy. After the infamous Jamia Hafsa episode in Pakistan[95] there has been a cultural transformation and women's radical voices (as mothers or activists) are becoming more visible.[96]

Of all the militant groups actively targeting women to expand their support networks for *jihad*, the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) uses the motherhood narrative most effectively in its mobilization strategy. The Lashkar chief, Hafiz Saed, has often been heard in conventions and rallies appealing to the sacrifices of the mothers in Islam in the cause of *jihad*. Motherhood provides greater justification for *jihad*, as appeals are made to the "mothers of Islam" to sacrifice their sons—who are, in turn, supposed to protect them. The sacrifice of the mother is held in greater esteem than the monetary contribution in *jihad*. Appeasing the mothers of the *mujahideen* is an important part of the strategy of militant groups. Women,

especially those in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, have in most cases not voluntarily accepted and allowed their sons and other kin to become *mujahideen* and wage *jihad*. The strategy of the LeT particularly has been to counter this resistance. Most paradoxically, while these mother narratives are part of the public face of *jihad* and political activism and women are encouraged to have a political voice, their roles are constructed within the accepted norms of femininity. A public voice is required of women, very often to reinstate them into the private sphere.[97]

Hum kya chaahte? Aazadi![98]

> In any conflict this is my personal experience we have a myth that women are the most peace loving, reconciler, the peace maker.[99]

Women have been engaged in militant activities in Kashmir in multiple ways: As political activists who courier arms, ammunitions, money, messages, and so on. They also provide shelter and food to militants. Women are involved in reconnaissance and gathering intelligence and are encouraged to use their sexuality to attract army officers and soldiers.[100] Shamshad Begum was arrested by the Indian security forces in October 2001 for allegedly acting as a guide responsible for safe travel routes for the members of the HM.[101] As ideological activists, women are playing an important role in enforcing the fundamentalist Islamist ideology in Kashmir, where predominantly a liberal-Sufi form of Islam had thrived for centuries. Women's bodies and lives have, therefore, become the battleground on which militant ideologies are played out as the liberal traditions of the past suffer the onslaught of religious fundamentalism.

A small number of women may also be involved in direct combat and have received arms training. However, as Manchanda argues, "Most of them turned out to be wives or relatives of well known militants and were implicated more by familial association than actual complicity."[102] Marriages between *mujahideen* from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to women in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir and vice versa are arranged and induced to bring the two parts of Kashmir together. Marrying girls from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir guarantees large sums of money for militants from Jammu and Kashmir, especially those who are receiving training in the camps in PoK. According to an intelligence report based on the questioning of LeT militant Hussain Shah, who surrendered in February 2005, most of the Kashmiri youth in the HM and LeT have married women from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, as arranged by their mentors. The idea behind these marriages is to break the ranks of militant outfits that have only indigenous Kashmiri youth. The reverse also happens, and a number of Kashmiri women have voluntarily married *mujahideen* from across the borders.[103] These marriages build kinship support systems within militant groups wherein the women married to militants inadvertently get involved in providing logistical and ideological support to militants.

Militancy in Kashmir has, in many ways, been an opportunity for women to realize agency in new forms of resistance to patriarchy and yet it may not have subverted patriarchal gendered norms in any significant way. The objective of this article has been to challenge the social and political scripting of the exclusion of women's voices. It has argued that women did play very important roles in the militancy, not in the direct combat but in providing logistical and ideological support to the militants. Unless their participation in the militancy is recognised, their voices will not be included in the political/peace processes. Women (like Asiya Andrabi, Farida Behenji, and Zamruda Habib) who have attempted to articulate

their politics and roles as against the established discourses are either considered extremes or at the fringes. While talking to them, the author noted the ambiguity in their expectations of the movement and what the "liberation struggle" would eventually mean, other than an Islamic state.[104] There seemed to be ambivalence about how their lives would change for the better if Kashmir were to achieve the self determination they all sought. Women's concerns are further marginalized in the garb of the Kashmiri liberation struggle that, according to these women themselves, required that it is not "sabotaged"[105] and retained its political cohesiveness and significance.

What this case study has tried to establish is the multiplicity of voices and politics with which women identify themselves as also the various ways in which their voices are excluded from the discourses on the militancy and the politics of the movement. This exclusion is scripted on the basis that "real" combat has been waged exclusively by men, and support roles, even though expected, have not been seen as important. Moreover patriarchal constructions of women's bodies and sexuality have prevented them from being directly recruited in the militancy. Women in Kashmir have not been radically transformed during their participation in the militancy which has in many cases been an extension of their traditional gendered roles but they have impacted local politics, gender relations and have negotiated spaces to articulate their concerns. However, they are not represented in any peace talks or political processes to address the conflict. The patriarchal leaders of the mainstream political parties and the separatist Hurriyat Conference determine and dominate the political agenda in Kashmir.

Any discussion of women's roles in the militancy may be silenced but as one former militant woman told the author in an interview, "Can any armed militancy succeed without women's support and participation?" The fortunes of the armed militancy in Kashmir changed as drastically after the women withdrew their popular support towards the end of the 1990s, as it had in the hey days when women were at the forefront of it. Privileging narratives of the victim Kashmiri woman (raped always by the Indian security forces), is a political conspiracy by the "patriarchs of the *azaadi* struggle ... using women for propaganda"[106] whose sole purpose is to exercise control over women's lives and bodies in the cultural and religious nationalism they wish to enforce in Kashmir. Yasin Malik (former militant of the JKLF and now a Hurriyat Leader) told the author in an interview that it is on account of their "sacrifices" in the militant struggle that men like him deserve to be and are legitimate voices at the negotiating table. By denying women any role in the militancy and thereby legitimacy and credibility as political actors, it is being ensured that women are kept out of political negotiations and peace talks, when and if they take place. Cynthia Enloe may have asked several years ago, "Where are the women?"[107] but it never loses its significance even today as feminists struggle to make sense of war, conflict, and militancy in several local contexts.

Notes

1. While gender and *jihad* in Kashmir are clearly addressed in this article, jingoism refers to the sometimes xenophobic and radical Islamist religio-political discourse in Kashmir that constructs non-Muslims as the other. This will become evident in the arguments presented in this article.

2. While it is acknowledged that there have been political movements inspired by several religious ideologies, this article is referring to Islamist political movements as applied to the case of Kashmir.

3. For more on women and *jihad* see David Cook, "Women Fighting in Jihad?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28(5) (2005), pp. 375–384.

4. See Haiffa A. Jawad, *The Rights of Women in Islam: An Authentic Approach* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998).
5. Cook, "Women Fighting in Jihad?," p. 376.
6. Ibid., p. 86.
7. Ibid., p. 383.
8. See Navnita Chadha Behera, *Demystifying Kashmir* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 2006).
9. See Andrew Whitehead, *A Mission In Kashmir* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2007).
10. Princely states were given the option of joining either India or Pakistan or remain independent.
11. Now called *Azad* (independent) Kashmir by Pakistan and Pakistan occupied Kashmir by India.
12. Whitehead talks about ambiguities regarding the actual accession document and therefore it is not clear how and when the Maharajah signed the accession document.
13. Whitehead, *A Mission in Kashmir.*
14. Ibid., p. 148.
15. These points were raised by former Indian High Commissioner to Islamabad, G. Parathasarathy, at a conference on Kashmir organized at the Army Headquarters in Srinagar that the author attended during a field trip in July 2008.
16. Now called Azad Kashmir, Pakistan occupied Kashmir, Pakistan held/administered Kashmir.
17. For a full text of the Article 370 refer to http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/Kashmir/article370.htm (accessed 17 July 2009).
18. Literally means *it was a different kind of passion.* This was said to the author by several women interviewed in July 2008. They said this while reminiscing about the early days of the militancy.
19. One of the interviewees in J and K whose identity remains anonymous for security reasons.
20. Kashmir is currently partitioned into Indian and Pakistani parts referred to as the state of Jammu and Kashmir in India and Pakistan occupied Kashmir (in the Indian discourse). Militant armed insurgency gripped Indian Kashmir in 1989 and since then has affected the state of Jammu and Kashmir as also other parts of India. The author does not like the word terrorism/ists, as it is bereft of any analytical meaning, preferring to use militancy instead, for the simple reason that Kashmiris themselves are comfortable using the term militants or militancy or even "gun culture."
21. Among the terrorist groups that are still active in Kashmir and have also carried out attacks in other parts of India are Hizbul Mujahaideen, Lashkar-e-Toiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Harkat-ul Mujahideen, and Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen. For more details on these groups, refer to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, available at http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/terrorists_list_j&k.htm (accessed 3 March 2010).
22. Notable militants turned politicians are Hasim Qureshi, Zafar Bhat, and Yasin Malik who are all part of the Hurriyat Conference, which is a loose conglomeration of separatist parties.
23. Rita Manchanda, "Guns and *Burqa*: Women in the Kashmiri Conflict," in Rita Manchanda, ed., *Women, War and Peace in South Asia: Beyond Victimhood to Agency* (New Dehli: Sage, 2001), pp. 42–101.
24. See ibid.
25. Also cited in ibid., p. 50.
26. The activities of the Dukhtaran-e-Millat are discussed in a separate section.
27. This was also corroborated during the author's field work.
28. See Manchanda, "Guns and *Burqa*," p. 66.
29. Corroborated in the author's interviews of Kashmiri women who lost their sons, husbands, fathers, and brothers. Either they were militants killed by the security forces or were ordinary civilians, who were taken into custody, killed in fake encounters, or in cross-firing.
30. See Manchanda, "Guns and *Burqa*," p. 89.

31. For more details on Jihadi groups in Kashmir refer to Amir Mir, *The True Face of Jihadis: Inside Pakistan's Network of Terror* (New Delhi: Roli Books, 2006); Praveen Swami, *India, Pakistan and the Secret Jihad* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Behera, *Demystifying Kashmir*; and Wilson John, *Coming Blowback: How Pakistan is Endangering the World* (New Delhi: Rupa and Co., 2009).

32. On the Mumbai terrorist attacks see http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers30%5Cpaper2948.html and http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers30%5Cpaper2946.html (accessed 4 March 2010).

33. Interview with Praveen Swami, July 2008, New Delhi.

34. Literally means *What will work here? Rule of the Prophet*. This was one of the slogans during the peak period of the militancy in the early 1990s and clearly suggests the Islamist overtones of the Kashmiri Movement.

35. It was pointed out earlier that Kashmir has a significant non-Muslim population comprised of Buddhists, Hindus, especially Kashmiri Pandits, Sikhs, and even Christians.

36. Praveen Swami and Asha Khosa are the two journalists interviewed in Delhi in July 2008. Asha Khosa is also a Kashmiri.

37. From field work notes. This is what some interviewees mentioned.

38. Ahmed Ali Fayyaz, "'Al-Qaeda' Declares War, Calls Kashmir 'Gateway Of Jihad Against India,"' *The Daily Excelsior*, 8 June 2007. Available at www.jammukashmir.com/archives/archives2007/kashmir20070608d.html (accessed 11 September 2007).

39. The militancy started as a movement to assert the Kashmiri identity as the basis of a separate Kashmiri State. This Kashmiri identity was often referred to as the "Kashmiriyat."

40. For a discourse on "Al Qaedaism" as an ideology refer to Jason Burke, *The True Story of Radical Islam* (New York: I B Tauris, 2004).

41. One interviewee claimed "Jagmohan, in the April of 1990 made arrangements for their (Pandits's) exodus from Kashmir and he put them in trucks to take them away. One person told me overnight 90 trucks were arranged to take them. So what was the impression they were giving world wide that here has been ethnic cleansing, that they have been killed, that they have been forced out of their homes but that is all totally false."

42. This interviewee was a middle-aged woman who argued that Kashmir should be part of Pakistan based on its Muslim majority population. Many others shared her views.

43. Seema Kazi, *Between Democracy and Nation* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2009), p. 116.

44. Some former militants (men) that the author talked to recalled the influence of the women at home (mothers and sisters) who were instrumental in influencing them to take up arms for the cause of the people.

45. Kazi, *Between Democracy and Nation*, p. 104.

46. Ibid., p. xxviii.

47. See Manchanda, "Guns and Burqa"; Manisha Sobhrajani, "Jammu and Kashmir: Women's Role in the Post-1989 Insurgency," *Faultlines*, 19 (2008). Available at http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume19/Article3.html (accessed 20 February 2009); Kazi, *Between Democracy and Nation*.

48. Pradeep Thakur, "LET Training Women Militants," *The Times of India*, 6 April 2007.

49. LoC is the military control line between India and Pakistan in the province of Kashmir. Originally known as the "Ceasefire Line," it was re-designated the "Line of Control" after the Simla Agreement, formalized in December 1971. Indians refer to their portion of the territory as Jammu and Kashmir, while Pakistanis refer to their portion of the captured territory as Azad (Free) Kashmir.

50. Interview with Asiya Andrabi, Srinagar, 28 March 2007.

51. Ibid

52. Ibid.

53. M. Mazharul Haque, "Profile: Asiya Andrabi: Warrior in Veil," *The Milli Gazette* 3(17) (1–15 September 2002). Available at www.milligazette.com/Archives/01092002/0109200264.htm (accessed 11 September 2007).

54. Mohan Lal Koul, "Part II: Chapter 6: Jamaat -i-Islami—An Outfit of Parochials," from *Kashmir: Wail of a Valley* (Delhi: Gyan Sagar Publications, 1999). Available online via the Kashmir Information Network, www.kashmir-information.com/wailvalley/b2chap6.html (accessed 11 September 2007).

55. "Dukhtaran-e-Millat," South Asia Terrorism Portal. Available at www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/dukhtaran.htm. (accessed 11 September 2007).

56. Interview with Asiya Andrabi, Srinagar, 28 March 2007.

57. "Dukhtaran-e-Millat," South Asia Terrorism Portal.

58. Sudha Ramachandran, "Women Lift the Veil on Kashmir Struggle," *Asia Times Online*, 7 March 2002. Available at www.atimes.com/ind-pak/DC07Df01.html (accessed 11 September 2007).

59. Refer to Haroon Mirani, "In Kashmir, Women Police Streets Taliban-Style," *Women's eNews*, 10 September 2006. Available at www.womensenews.org/article.cfm/dyn/aid/2883/context/cover (accessed 11 September 2007).

60. "Kashmir's Female Separatist Trains Her Sons for Jihad," Agence-France Presse via *The Times of India*, 11 March 2002. Available at www.jammukashmir.com/archives/archives2002/kashmir20020311d.html (accessed 11 September 2007).

61. Interview with Asiya Andrabi, Srinagar, 28 March 2007.

62. Andrabi mentioned her Arab lineage in an interview; see Aditi Bhaduri, "Inshallah, Kashmir Will Become Part of Pakistan," *Outlook India*, 14 August 2006. Available at www.outlookindia.com/full.asp?fodname=20060814&fname=Interview±Ayisa±%28F%29&sid=1 (accessed 3 March 2010).

63. Interview with Asiya Andrabi, Srinagar, 28 March 2007.

64. Barkha Goel, "The 'Pretty Face' of Terrorism," *Sify News*, 30 June 2004. Available at http://headlines.sify.com/news/fullstory.php?id=13510345&headline=Women~&~the~'pretty~face'~of~terrorism (accessed 14 June 2010)

65. See "Delhi's Abu Ghraib," a report on Zamruda's prison ordeal in *Honour,* the monthly magazine (May 2008). Zamruda mentions the circumstances of her arrest and imprisonment. She even recounted this in her interview with the present author in July 2008.

66. Interview with Anjum Zamruda Habib, Srinagar, July 2008.

67. Interview with Yasmeen Raja and other MKM members at the MKM office, Srinagar, July 2008.

68. This is mentioned by noted terrorism analyst and Kashmir expert, Praveen Swami, in "The Revival of Communalism," *Frontline: India's National Magazine* 16(6) (13–26 March 1999). Available at www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl1606/16060150.htm (accessed 11 September 2007).

69. See http://www.jammu-kashmir.com/insights/insight20060922a.html (accessed 5 March 2010).

70. See http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/NEWS/India/LeT_training_women_militants/rssarticleshow/1862696.cms (accessed 20 February 2009).

71. Founder and ideological leader of the *Lashkar-e-Toiba.*

72. Manchanda, "Guns and *Burqa*," p. 79.

73. "J&K: Woman Suicide Attacker Blown to Pieces," *The Indian Express*, 14 October 2005.

74. James H. Walsh, "30 Percent of Islamic Suicide Bombers Are Women," *NewsMax.com*, 24 April 2006. Available at www.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2006/4/24/105907.shtml (accessed 11 September 2007).

75. Interview with Asiya Andrabi, Srinagar, 28 March 2007.

76. See Mir, *The True Face of Jihadis*; Swami, *India, Pakistan and the Secret Jihad*; and John, *Coming Blowback* on militant groups in Pakistan and Kashmir.

77. During the author's field work most Kashmiris were unwilling to accept that militants had harmed them. They believed that security forces were the only ones violating human rights.

78. Interview with a former militant, July 2008.

79. Women like Asiya Andrabi.

80. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was the first Al Qaeda leader who approved of women becoming suicide bombers in Iraq. There is still debate within Al Qaeda and its associates regarding women

suicide bombers and while one faction led by the Egyptian doctor, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama's deputy, seems comfortable with the idea, it is the likes of Taliban Chief Mullah Omar who oppose this idea vehemently.

81. Literally means *we are all mothers,* and was often referred to by Kashmiri women when they talked about the conflict and militancy.

82. A police officer posted in Srinagar, with whom the author met during a field trip in Kashmir in March 2007, recalls this slogan, which was most popular during the early days of the militancy.

83. During the author's interviews and interactions.

84. Kazi, *Between Democracy and Nation*, p. 140.

85. For example, Mughal queen Noorjahan was a powerful wife and mother as was emperor Akbar's nanny or foster mother, Maham Anagha.

86. Jijabai, Shivaji's mother, inspired him to take on the Mughals and save the honor of the Marathas.

87. Shahnawaz Farooqi, "Women's Rights – An Insidious Theory," *Daily Jasarat*, March 8, 2007.

88. Manchanda, "Guns and Burqa," p. 53.

89. The traditional Kashmiri song of celebration.

90. Manchanda, "Guns and Burqa," pp. 50–51.

91. Asiya Andrabi referred to the wife and mother narrative, referring to herself as a good mother and a faithful wife.

92. Former militant and founder of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front who is now a political leader with the Hurriyat Conference.

93. *Shahid* means martyr. Maqbool Butt was the founder of the JKLF and was one of the first militants in the Kashmir Valley. He was later captured by the Indian forces and imprisoned in the Tihar jail in Delhi where he was eventually hanged. He is a celebrated hero in Kashmir.

94. Interview with Praveen Swami, July 2008.

95. Jamia Hafza Mosque in Islamabad, Pakistan was taken over by *burqa*-clad women militants who were armed with sticks in 2007. The government later carried out a military operation to flush these militants out in which many people died. This incident showed that Muslim women in the subcontinent, especially in Pakistan and Kashmir, were increasingly getting radicalized.

96. Interview with Praveen Swami, July 2008.

97. On LeT mothers see Farhat Haq, "Militarism and Motherhood: Women of the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 32(4) (2007), pp. 1023–1046; C. M. Naim, "The Mothers of the Lashkar," *Outlook India* (December 2008). Available at http://www.outlookindia.com/fullprint.asp?choice=1&fodname=20081215&fname=naim&sid=1, (accessed 8 February 2009).

98. Literally means, *What do we want? Freedom*! This is a popular slogan used by the Kashmiri women in public demonstrations even today.

99. A former militant interviewed in July 2008.

100. "LeT Raises Women Jehadis in its Terror Network," *The Times of India*, 20 November 2006. Available at http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/482012.cms (accessed 5 March 2010).

101. "Veiled Women Show the Way to Terrorists in Kashmir," *The Statesman* (India), 20 October 2001. Also cited by Carla J. Cunningham, "Cross-Regional Trends in Female Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 26(3) (May 2003), pp. 171–195.

102. Manchanda, "Guns and *Burqa*," p. 78.

103. "J and K Jehadis Get Bounty, Stipend to Wed PoK Girls," *The Times of India*, 5 April 2007.

104. The author also did not get the sense that men spoke with one voice or that they visualized freedom in the same way. In fact, when men (students, politicians, and former militants) were asked about what they thought would be an ideal solution to the conflict and to end what they perceived as Indian "occupation," not one of them was able to provide a concrete answer. In that sense the Kashmiri movement has constantly evolved and identities and expectations have never been consistent.

105. It was interesting to note that among all the interviewees, Hameeda Nayeem mentioned that women's issues should be highlighted later and if they are included now the "liberation" movement would get sabotaged. Hameeda is a professor of English at the Kashmir University, who is known to be outspoken and express her independent thoughts.

106. Manchanda, "Guns and Burqa," p. 96.

107. Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000).

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